NEW PHAZES

COLORADO SPRINGS' LESBIAN NEWSLETTER

December 1995 Vol. 8, No. 5

Dear Community:

Happy holidays to all. May these days find you warm, well and surrounded by friends and family.

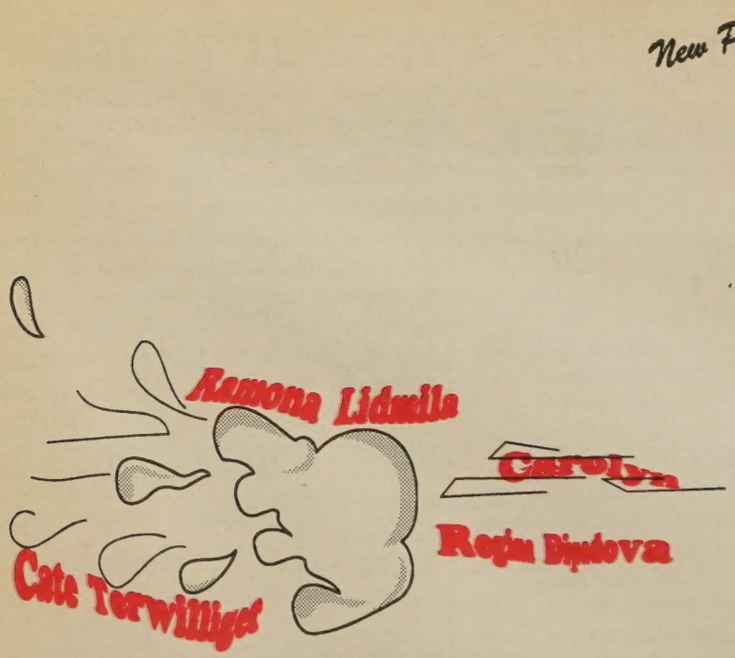
This month marks a transition for New Phazes; several veteran staffers are going gently into that good night, to be replaced by youthful blood (see Reg's farewell inside). Those of us who are departing wish them well and, one last time, encourage all of you to add your ideas and energy to the mix.

As always, we won't publish an issue in January. Please remember to have all advertising and editorial copy for February's issue to us no later than Jan. 17.

The new year's first staff meeting is 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan.7, 1996. BYOB and munchies and join us for food, fun, football and lots of brainstorming. Call 634-0236 for location and details. We'll collate February's issue 6 p.m. Jan. 24 at our office, 121 N. Parkside.

'Til next year, we remain.....

New Phazes



NEW PHAZES

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New Phazes is produced entirely by volunteers 11 times a year (no issue in January). We reserve the right to edit letters and articles for clarity and conciseness; all submissions must include a name and phone number. In the spirit of openness and community, it is New Phazes policy to publish writers' complete names; we will consider exceptions. Our Support network - staff, contributors and advertisers - include lesbians and non-lesbian allies. Editorial and advertising deadline is absolutely the 17th of each month. All advertising must be prepaid.

December 1995

New Phazes

On-going Activities

Sundays
- Pueblo MCC, 12:30 p.m., (719) 543-6466
- MCC Service at All Souls Unitarian
- Dignity Brunch, 2nd Sundays, Colorado Grill, 11:30 a.m.
- PPGLCC Bowling League, Brunswick Lanes, 8 p.m., 260-5987

Mondays
- Gay A.A., 471-4GAY

Wednesdays
- MCC Live Care Group
- Inside/Out Youth Group, Pride Center, 6 p.m.

Thursdays
- Bingo, PPGLCC Fundraiser
- CGRA, 1st & 3rd Thursdays, Branding Iron, 7 p.m.
- Diversity Chorus Rehearsal, All Souls, 7 p.m.

Fridays
- Game Night, 3rd Fridays, 260-5987
- Gay A.A., 471-4GAY

Saturdays
- Dignity Mass, 1st & 3rd Saturdays, Sacred Heart, 7 p.m.
- Women's Social group, 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 471-4GAY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Gay A.A 471-4GAY World AIDS Day	2 Women's Social Group 471-4GAY Dignity Mass, Sacred Heart, 7PM
3 Judy Collins, Paramount Theatre, 7:30pm, 520-9090 for info. MCC Service, All Souls	4 Gay A.A 471-4GAY	5 Boy George with Eve Gallagher, Paramount Theatre, Denver, 7:30pm, (303) 694-1234.	6 Inside/Out Youth Group, Pride Center, 6PM MCC Live Care Group	7 CGRA Branding Iron, 7PM Bingo PPGLCC Fundraiser Diversity Chorus Rehearsal, All Souls, 7PM	8 Gay A.A 471-4GAY	9
10 Dignity Brunch, Colorado Grill, 11:30AM MCC Service, All Souls PPGLCC Bowling League, Brunswick Lanes, 8PM, 260-5987	11 Gay A.A 471-4GAY	12	13 Inside/Out Youth Group, Pride Center, 6PM MCC Live Care Group	14 Bingo PPGLCC Fundraiser Diversity Chorus Rehearsal, All Souls, 7PM	15 Game Night 260-5987 Gay A.A 471-4GAY	16 Women's Social Group 471-4GAY Dignity Mass, Sacred Heart, 7PM
17 MCC Service, All Souls PPGLCC Bowling League, Brunswick Lanes, 8PM, 260-5987 Pueblo MCC, 12:30PM, 543-6466	18 Gay A.A 471-4GAY	19	20 Inside/Out Youth Group, Pride Center, 6PM MCC Live Care Group	21 CGRA Branding Iron, 7PM Bingo PPGLCC Fundraiser Diversity Chorus Rehearsal, All Souls, 7PM	22 Gay A.A 471-4GAY	23
24 MCC Service, All Souls PPGLCC Bowling League, Brunswick Lanes, 8PM, 260-5987 Pueblo MCC, 12:30PM, 543-6466	25 Christmas Day	26	27 Inside/Out Youth Group, Pride Center, 6PM MCC Live Care Group	28 Bingo PPGLCC Fundraiser Diversity Chorus Rehearsal, All Souls, 7PM	29 Gay A.A 471-4GAY	30
31 MCC Service, All Souls PPGLCC Bowling League, Brunswick Lanes, 8PM, 260-5987 Pueblo MCC, 12:30PM, 543-6466						

Printed by Chameleon Graphic Design

READERS FORUM

F. Y. I.

Inside/Out Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Youth Group needs volunteers to assist in organized recreation activities. Group meets Wednesday nights. Hours vary from 2 to 10 a month.

We also need volunteers to supervise our new recreation center in the evening. The recreation center is a very important component to our program. It is important for these kids to have a safe place to socialize and have fun. Please don't let them down - VOLUNTEER!

Call Regina at 578-3160 Monday through Friday for more information.

◆ ◆ ◆

To the Editor:

We have lost many older friends to AIDS. Sadder still, we have recently met a number of young men in their twenties who are HIV+ and we wonder how this continues to happen. We know that organizations such as S-CAP and other gay and lesbian groups have spent alot of energy and money trying to educate everyone about the dangers of AIDS and the necessity of safe sex...and yet men and women are still being infected.

We feel that we must increase our efforts to get the message out, especially to our young friends. Groups such as the Inside Out Youth Group, P-FLAG and others are perhaps our most important key to this process and we must get them involved in this education. Several years ago the rumor among youth was that AIDS is an older person's disease, but much to our sorrow this has not proven true. If there is no cure, at least we do know how to combat the spread this epidemic. Spread the word, not the disease!

Sincerely,
The Church Ladies

◆ ◆ ◆

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
this month to:

1. Jocelyn Sanberg
2. Leslie Doerr ("the little womyn")—Happy Birthday, Darlin!

Martina and the Travelers Bank is offering a new Visa card that features a photo she took from the stage during the 1993 March on Washington. The card offers lesbians and gays a way to demonstrate pride and support our charitable causes. It has no annual fee, an introductory rate of 6.9 percent and offers free cards for chosen family members and the option for domestic partners to apply jointly for increased credit lines. Navratilova sees this as a way to harness the economic power of the gay community to achieve humanitarian goals. Subaru is a founding sponsor.

◆ ◆ ◆

A new concept in gay travel is being introduced this holiday season: a learning vacation that satisfies your interests, challenges your mind and offers an insider's look at the authentic people and places that you visit. Outbound Travel invites gay and lesbian travelers, their friends and families to partake in "Christmas in Santa Fe" Dec. 20-27.

Travelers will experience the unique and enchanting way that Christmas is celebrated in the Southwest, from religious ceremonies in Native American Pueblos and Hispanic churches, to banquets and feasts that blend the best cuisine of three cultures. For more information about "Christmas in Santa Fe" and other Outbound Travel programs, contact Brett Thompson at 415-626-0649, fax 415-863-7972, or e-mail BrettSteve@aol.com.

◆ ◆ ◆

The Motion Picture Association of America's classification and rating appeals board was reconsidering an NC-17 rating it gave "When Night is Falling." No decision had been made at press time.

October Films is appealing the rating, which the distributor says is due to two scenes of lesbian lovemaking in the film. A statement released by the distributor said the "innappropriate NC-17 rating implies something graphic, gratuitous and pornagraphic, which is extremely misleading for this film, a lavishly crafted romantic love story."

A spokeswoman for the MPAA's ratings board has said that the two "explicit sex scenes" would be considered "out of bounds" for children under 17 by "most American parents."

The film was set for release Nov. 17 in New York and Los Angeles, and nationally Nov. 24. (Variety Magazine)

ART OF ESPRESSO
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The Best Way to Survive the Holidays

Whether it's to give yourself a break from shopping or your busy holiday schedule, come to Art of Espresso. It's the perfect place to relax by yourself or with friends.

Who knows? Maybe you'll like the experience so much that you'll want to give an Art of Espresso Gift Certificate to someone or find a wonderful present in the Worthing Studio & Gallery.

Ted Ruybalid
Fri Dec 1 8-11PM

Joe Uveges
Sat Dec 2 8-11PM

open poetry reading
Wed Dec 6 7-9 PM

Holly Lynn
Thu Dec 7 8-10 PM

The Koolers
Fri Dec 8 8-11PM

Jeff Miller
Sat Dec 9 8-11PM

Dave Sauer
Thu Dec 14 8-10 PM

Morello & Smith
Fri Dec 15 8-11PM

Coyote Moon
Sat Dec 16 8-11PM

open poetry reading
Wed Dec 20 7-9 PM

Raquel Voeks
Thurs Dec 21 8-10 PM

Phil Volan
Fri Dec 22 8-11PM

Bluegrass Buffet
Sat Dec 23 8-11PM

Closed for Christmas
Mon Dec 25

Jim Young
Thu Dec 28 8-10 PM

Paul Whitens
Fri Dec 29 8-11 PM

Coyote Moon
Sat Dec 30 8-11 PM

20 21 W. Colorado Ave., Colo. Spgs, CO
Mon-Thu 7am-10pm Fri 7am-12am
Sat 9am-12am Sun 9am-6pm
632-9306

Creative Corner

Edited by Regina Dipadova

If you were to live to be ninety years old, what year would it be? I will be ninety in 2044. My mother will be ninety in 2015. My daughter will be ninety in 2069.

Close your eyes. Take yourself into the future, to the year of your ninetieth birthday, whatever year that may be. Now imagine a space that you might go to for ceremony, counsel, healing. See it in your mind's eye, vividly. Where is it located? What shape is it? What materials is it made of? What source of energy powers it? How does the water taste? Where does it come from? Are there trees there? What kinds? How old are these trees?

Now imagine a ninety-year-old crone is the caretaker of this healing space—she is you in the future—your wisest, loving crone-self. See here in front of you now, walking towards you. Look into her eyes. Feel the love she has for you, the tenderness and compassion.

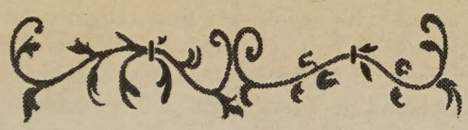
Tell her what is on your mind. Tell her what is in your heart. Let her share with you her counsel. Let her touch you with her healer's hands. Let her sing you the songs that have come to her as gifts from the spirit world. When you open your eyes, bring back a song.

Claudia L'Amoreaux

Wild Crones Meet

I wake before to a room full-
big-breasted and little, many European,
many black-skinned, all speaking
with accents. I find the head one,
reach out three times to touch her arm,
high up, heart-side. Fourth time
she bats my hand away,
sits herself down in an easy-chair
and bares her chest,
fingers fanning out over the breast-fold
near the shoulder. She's showing us
how to hold our hearts,
to open them wider.
Some old ones start chanting,
and the chant
catches on, all different chants mingling,
yet I'm still not singing.
I tell the heart-teacher,
softly, in her ear,
Have each one who knows
teach her song to one just beginning.

Rosie King-Smyth



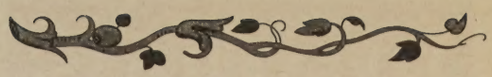
Turning 36, Missing Innocence

I miss childhood
when everyday was a sunny day
when days were filled w/wonder
when Christmas morning
meant running
to the tree to find all the prizes Santa left for me.

I miss childhood
when adults were people to admire,
superheros were in abundance
or pretending to be one was ok.
When lots of people would smile
at me, giggle with me
or out of blue, just pick me up,
twirl me around and hug me tight.

I miss childhood
no, not mine
but the one I would have
if I could go back
for just a day.

-Reg



Meditation for a Good Lunch

Wake up on the right side of the bed, with compassion and forgiveness for yourself and others.

Tune in with the outside...weather, wind, clouds, vibrations. Tune in with the inside...energy, emotions, body, mind, spirit. Sit in silence, no matter how short. Breathe.

Brew your beverage of choice and eat something light that is grounding and delicious.

Help something grow...water a plant, feed a cat, nurture a child. Let your creative juices flow - whatever it takes!

...write a poem about your dreams, draw a scene out the window, sing along with a opera, put on drum music and dance...Keep your creative juices flowing, no matter how boring, repetitive or linear the work you pursue.

Stretch your legs, neck, mouth, eyeballs and everything else periodically. Make faces at yourself in the mirror.

Focus intensely on something you care about.

If you keep a list, cross something off of it.

Make and receive phone calls with a spirit of adventure-open to receive a new friend or contact, a problem solved, a challenge discovered.

Pay attention to where you are.

Check outdoors regularly for changes in temperature, precipitation, cloud formations.

When the time is right, prepare a meal of elegant simplicity, (or a succulent feast).

Use the finest, freshest ingredients (or cherished leftovers). Add a variety of texture (more fun and interesting) and a good measure of color (green being a perennial favorite).

Tantalize the taste buds-don't get hung up on salty and sweet...experiment with sour and bitter.

Enjoy the process. Sing, chant, listen to great music. Breathe. Visualize nourishment in every chop and stir.

Create your eating space-weather appealing, eat outside.

Consider a companion-a friend you invited days ago, or on impulse just this morning...someone who appreciates your true nature, who'll add a strong dash of laughter to the menu...(digestion improves when the heart is joyous.)

Or enjoy your own company-have a stream of consciousness conversation with yourself, listen to bird songs, watch plants grow, empty your mind, fill your senses.

Take an inbreath, an outbreath.

Drop unnecessary baggage.

Say Grace. Be Grace.

Remember who you really are.

Chew slowly and mindfully, with compassion and gratitude for the entities that gave of themselves.

Eat with relish and delight.

Have a delicious afternoon for dessert. You know how.

-Marigold Fine

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physical abuse
unwanted sexual contact
or threats in your
relationship?

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THE ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

LOVE NOTES

In the February issue New Phazes will run Love Notes in the Classified section for all who want to send a message to that special someone !! Cost is only 20 cents per word and the deadline is Jan 17. New Phazes staff will vote on the "Best Love Note" and the winner will receive a New Phazes T-Shirt.

SENDERS NAME:_____
ADDRESS:_____
PHONE #:_____

LOVE NOTE:_____
_____
_____
_____

TOTAL WORDS _____ X .20 = _____ amount due
Must pay in advance.
Mail To: New Phazes, PO Box 6485, Colorado Springs CO 80934-6485

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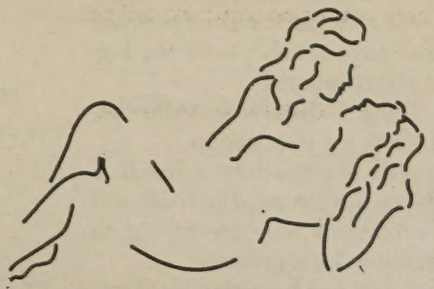

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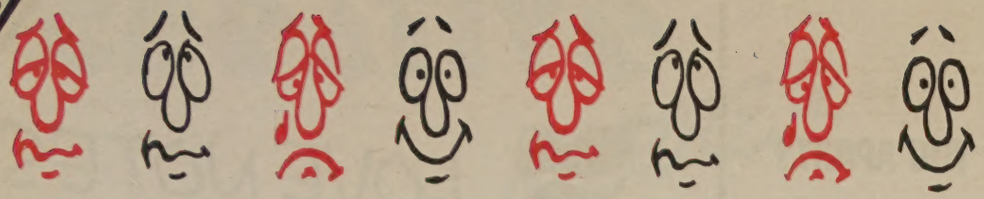

PASSING ON THE KEY

by Regina Dipadova

November 7 was the last meeting that I participated in as manager of New Phazes. It was during that meeting I handed over the New Phazes mailbox key to Sally Hall, the new manager. After six years of contributing and managing I'm stepping down along with some other key staff—people who have been with New Phazes three years or more.

It was a difficult decision for me. The five of us who are stepping down felt it was time for a whole new crew of womyn to take over and move New Phazes in a new direction. The five of us felt we did the best we could getting New Phazes to where it is today. We had the potential to do more, but we were pretty burned out. Hence, the new staff.

In saying good-bye, I wanted to share with you how proud I am to say I worked on New Phazes and how this newsletter stands out from all the others. Here are a few facts about the paper:

- For more than eight years, New Phazes has continued to print at least 11 monthly issues.
- New Phazes is the oldest lesbian newsletter in Colorado, and was the state's only lesbian newsletter for five years.
- New Phazes has always run as a community paper; readers and advertisers give it financial support and have the biggest say in how it continues.
- New Phazes always considers articles and feedback for publication.
- New Phazes has never made a profit, but has always donated to local and national organizations who are trying to make a difference in lesbian lives.
- New Phazes has helped individuals in the community in whatever way it could.
- New Phazes mails nationwide and is listed in many national publications.
- New Phazes has held dances, concerts, plays, cookie contests, art shows and much more to benefit the womyn of our community and bring us together.

Our mission statement has been honored, and I am proud to have been a contributor. As much as I will miss New Phazes, I strongly believe the five of us who are stepping down are leaving the paper in good hands. That's not to say the new staff won't make mistakes — we made plenty — but they have what is most important for New Phazes to continue: excitement. Very few New Phazes staffers have experience producing a newsletter; what we have had is time, excitement and a love of the paper that made it happen.

I wish the new staff well and I hope more of you will come forward and volunteer. The most exciting time to be a part of anything is at its beginning. New Phazes still needs writers and office people. To those of you who choose not to volunteer (but continue to financially support the paper), please be patient, open and supportive of the new staff. Your feedback is important. Finally, to Cate, Ramona, Tami, Jackie and Carolyn: thanks for hanging in there even when we were down to $1.98 in our treasury! Thanks for sharing your dedication and talent through the years. A special thanks to all those who came to help collate. I hope we stay in touch.

It was fun and it was real. Take Care.

Regina

(719) 471-2828
(800) 866-7662

SALLY M. HALL
FINANCIAL ADVISOR

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH INC.
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S-CAP-ADES

by Kem Winternitz

The focus of this month's column is the S-CAP Interfaith Coalition. Their mission is to offer spiritual support to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. By providing a non-judgmental presence of grace, hope and compassion, they respect and honor each person's background and beliefs.

The Interfaith Coalition is a diverse spiritual community that recognizes the implications involved when a person is diagnosed with the HIV virus. Currently, their consortium of organizations number fourteen different congregations.

The Coalition plays an important role in helping HIV positive individuals, their families, and their friends maintain their physical and emotional health. Studies show that with this type of assistance, HIV positive persons experience an improved quality of life, have fewer opportunistic infections, and live longer. They provide client and caregiver support along with bereavement and grief support. They, also, sponsor Non-denominational celebration services and spiritual retreats.

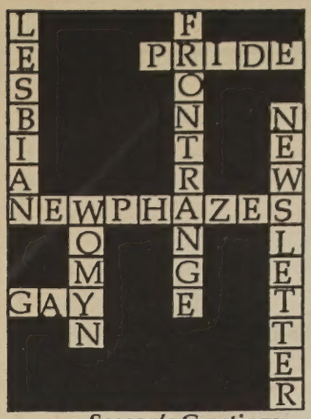
Did you know ... in El Paso County, over 900 people have tested positive for the HIV virus? Demographically, these people range in age from infancy to senior citizens, and come from a variety of ethnic, social and spiritual backgrounds. This number includes only those persons who have tested and/or received treatment for an HIV related illness, but not the many who may be infected and have yet to seek treatment.

CLASSIFIEDS

Cheap classified advertising...
Your ad right here - 20 cents/word!!!

For Sale: Lifestyle 3500 flywheel exercise bike. Like new. $125! Men's 10-speed bike, $40. 685-5090.

Inside/Out Youth Group is in need of a television and VCR for movie nite. If you have one collecting dust and would like to donate, (tax write off) call Regina 578-3160. The kids would really appreciate it!



BITS & Pieces

by Jacquelyn Beyer

Season's Greetings:

Ten years ago Cris Williamson's album "SnowAngel" came out, with songs such as "Hard Candy Christmas", "Moonlight Ranch" and "Il Est Ne Le Divin Enfant" along with the title song. I don't remember a similar effort from lesbian or gay artists since then, but now "Out" reports that David Friedman, a New York gay song writer (who has contributed to many Disney productions) has three songs on what "Out" calls the "first" such seasonal album. I guess that is technically true, because the 1985 album was only Cris. But anyway, if you want to hear family voices for Christmas, the album from Streeter is called "Winter Moon." Artists include Holly Near, Lea De Laria and Howard McGillin (of Broadway's "Kiss of the Spider Woman.)"

☺ ☺ ☺

Families: The Continuing Debate:

"Out" for Dec./Jan. also reports on a forthcoming video diary meditation on "Family Values", especially the paradox of the amazing tug of biological family units even in the face of their disintegration and failure to provide security, protection, emotional warmth and support. Pam Walton, who used the "life as it happens" documentary approach in a 1993 diary, "Silverlake Life: The View From Here", finds herself in trans-country communication with her father after a hiatus of 15 years. She visits with him in New Hampshire where he is a "family values" activist who considers the death penalty appropriate for practicing homosexuals.

The mystery for Walden is how her family can produce such strong ties in spite of her father's rejection, which represents the profound failure of biological family life. Why does such a father still matter? I guess holidays are times we all wonder about such issues.

☺ ☺ ☺

Youth Services:

An exciting adventure in skydiving was part of a fund raising event in where else? – southern California. The Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Center, along with supporters of gay and lesbian teenagers and the California City Skydive Center, raised more than $300,000 when 345 people, mostly first timers, did the "Geronimo" act last August. No reserve chutes were needed and no parachute packagers engaged in sabotage, but improper landings caused seven injuries, two of which were serious. One drag queen went out the door with a T-shirt which read, "Save a Teen, Drop a Queen."

The money will be used for health care and other counseling efforts with gay and lesbian teens. Lorrie Jean, the executive director of the center, noted that, "This jump is a metaphor for the plight of gay and lesbian youth. We're all out here in the middle of the desert alone but together, taking a step that is the most frightening thing these people have ever done, and, yet, it's the most exhilarating thing too, like coming out is for youth."

☺ ☺ ☺

Horses R Us:

Or something like that. I think the perception that little girls have an affinity for horses seems counter to demands for "femininity". A place for attachment, development of skills, pride in a sense of physical control and strength explain my childhood dream of all but becoming a horse, and my observations about the place of little girls and horses in wonderful stories, movies and memoirs. Imagine my surprise on reading a sports note that Julie Krone rode three winners on a November day at Aqueduct to bring her to a total of 3,001 winners – making her the leading female rider in racing history. Why the surprise? Because somehow it slipped by me how the early battles for women to perform as jockeys has segued into a time of comparative records and recognition of the toughness and spirit of women who handle their horses skillfully, overcome horrific injuries, and ignore the scorn and obstacles set by recalcitrant "traditionalists".

☺ ☺ ☺

Travel Notes:

Going to New York City? Know any lesbian friends in the Big Apple? Like live theatre? The New York Times in September reports on the opening of a new theatre – the off-Broadway adjunct to The Roundabout, a successful 499-seat off-Broadway theatre at Broadway and West 45th street. This venue has achieved financial stability and respect for its attention to established plays and playwrights since coming under the management of Todd Haimes as artistic director in 1983. Now Haimes wants to provide for more adventuresome production of new plays. But the "bit" that engages us here is that Haimes' creative effort to draw audiences in one of the harshest markets in the U.S. includes the recognition of the plight of singles in Manhattan. His response was to have singles nights with the post performance parties. This has evolved into other changes such as an early curtain for suburban commuters and special party nights for gay men and lesbians. So remember the Roundabout and its sister venue, the Laura Pels Theatre if you find yourself in New York, New York.

☺ ☺ ☺

Post Election Notes:

Hurrah for Maine voters and all the people who put together the coalition which beat back the most recent effort to use law to stigmatize and isolate gay men and lesbians. Bruce Fine, a media consultant on the Constitution, was a major advisor to the anti-gay forces with his recommendation that they not mention gays, just ensure that no further additions were made to Maine's anti-discrimination codes.

Locally, the District 11 school board looks to be reasonable, but we certainly know where all the selfish people live – Falcon votes for schools, Pueblo votes for environmentally interesting plans for the inner city and schools, and Manitou Springs was also relatively progressive. Well, what can one say?

☺ ☺ ☺

Post Supreme Court Hearing Notes:

There was the usual tiny audience at UCCS to hear Jean Dubofsky, the opposing attorney during Amendment 2 oral arguments before the Supreme Court in October. Whatever legal advice the C.F.V. people had from the religious right's think tanks (they were responsible for the wording of the Amendment as well as the advice to focus on "special rights" in the campaign) we can be proud of the help we had in the fight against 2.

Dubofsky is a major figure in a film production by Denver Channel 12's Barbara Jabaily along with Boulder psychologist Glenda Russell. The film, shown Nov. 8, is called "Inner Journeys, Public Stands" and deals with the transformations of many anti-amendment "straight but not narrow" supporters as they worked on the campaign. Joanne Ostrow's column in the Nov. 7 *Denver Post* tells the story of the making of the film and the purpose in showing it: to allow straight people, as well as homophobes, to identify with inner issues of privilege and stereotype when they confront real issues of bigotry and contempt. Russell notes that there is a sociological term – "courtesy stigma" – when people who defend an "out" group are treated with the same disapprobation as is the group. People in the film include Rabbi Steven Foster, Boulder Mayor Leslie Durgan, James White of Colorado Springs United Church of Christ, Pat Romero (mother and past president of PFLAG) and Dubofsky.

☺ ☺ ☺

Book For the Season:

Speaking of coalitions, an excellent source for the validation of such a political strategy and for recommended future political tactics can be found in Urvashi Vaid's "Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation." In the spirit of the holidays, I'll forego the recap of the differences between essentialism in politics and coalitions.

Have a great Christmas/Hannakuh/Solstice/New Years'/two months until we come around again.

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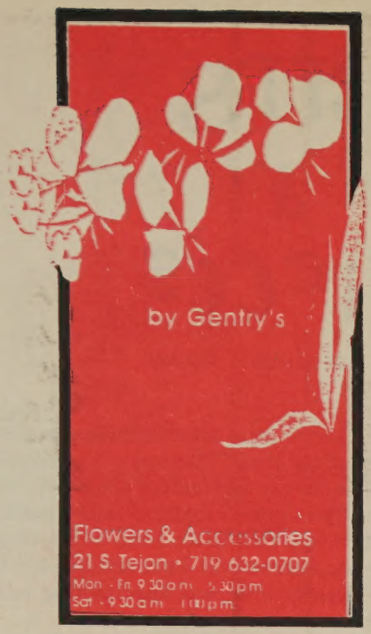

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LOVE MATTERS

By Linda Sutton

some thoughts on lesbian love

"There are two possible outcomes of a lesbian date; either the two women never date again, or they get married."

JoAnn Loulan, Lesbian Passion

QUESTION:

Why do lesbians find it so hard to date? By dating, I mean spending a good deal of time getting to know one another before calling it a relationship, and/or getting to know a number of different people before zeroing in on one. It would seem to save a great deal of grief later on if we really knew who we were marrying.

RESPONSE:

I can only speculate about dating; my only experience is in avoiding it.

The conventional wisdom is that lesbians could have longer lasting, higher quality relationships if they shopped around first. Makes sense on paper. In real life, however, dating seems to strike terror in the hearts of most lesbians. Why is that?

Many women say they feel too vulnerable to initiate a date. Others say it feels too awkward, "unnatural". Dating brings up all of our self-esteem issues. Are we good enough, smart enough, cute enough? As much as we long to be loved, we are terrified to put ourselves out there for fear no one will ever choose us. If we don't ask, we can't be refused. We're also afraid of acceptance. What if we ask and the answer is yes? Can we handle that? As girls, we were taught to be sexually passive. As females, we seem to be naturally cautious. So, some women just wait - hoping that if they go out to a party, to a bar, to a political gathering, and "look available", maybe someone will notice them.

Finally, someone does come along. You go out once or twice. She seems to really like you. You "kind-of" like her back. She likes you enough to want to be in a relationship. Fearful that no one else will come along, flattered that someone really wants you, you decide to want her back. You begin a relationship.

Or, someone comes along whom you really want. She really wants you too. You've both recently had your hearts broken. You jump right into a relationship before either of you changes her mind. So much for taking some time. So much for playing the field. Our great emotional need to be loved keeps us from exploring the relationship's potential; it also keeps us from dating more than one person at a time.

Our urgency also is driven by our evolutionary make-up. We are, after all, designed to fall in love, have sex, and reproduce. Once we are attracted to a person, we are under the influence of a very powerful sexual chemical known as PEA. This chemical puts us in an altered state of consciousness in which we feel open, safe, euphoric, and complete. We feel as if we already know this person very deeply. We are convinced THIS IS IT. We then lock into our new love. We make a commitment, confident that we have enough information. Looking any further is out of the question. Dating, after all, is a pretty rational activity. Mating is not.

As lesbians, dating offers some unique challenges. As someone I know said recently: "There are no social rules for lesbian dating like there are for other social activities, like asking a friend for dinner. So when I'm interested in someone, I just ask her if she wants to go to dinner." As a result, the friend probably doesn't know that she's being asked out on a date. Lots of lesbians tell me they're hanging out with someone new, but they are not exactly sure what it means. I've also heard lesbians say they are attracted to someone new but don't know for sure if she's a lesbian and are too afraid to ask.

Instead of being direct with a potential date, we pump our friends for information. "Is so and so a lesbian?" "Is she involved with anyone?" "Do you think she would be interested in me?" Asking her ourselves seems out of the question. And if we are inclined to ask, we don't know what to say. How do you ask a lesbian out, anyway? How do you find out for sure if she is a lesbian or not? How do you distinguish dinner from a date? Many lesbians really struggle with these questions. None of us ever took a class in lesbian dating. Our moms didn't give us any tips.

Lesbians have another big problem - internal homophobia. Loulan again: "If you ask a lesbian for a date, you're admitting you're a lesbian and not just falling into bed with someone as if by mistake." Many lesbians are too uncomfortable with their sexuality to spend much time dating or to be direct in their dating. You see, each time we think about approaching another woman for a date, we come up against our lesbian self-esteem issues.

Those issues Loulan calls our "lesbian snot." "It's the feeling that there is something wrong with being a lesbian," she says. "We all have it. Why else aren't we shouting our love from the rooftops?" Most of the time we keep our lesbian snot at bay. We fool ourselves into thinking we are perfectly comfortable with our sexuality (although we were rarely having sex at the end of our last relationship.) Or, we try to pretend that we're not really lesbians. (Our last two relationships just-so-happened to be with women.) Those kinds of rationalizations work fine most of the time – until we begin feeling lonely and start looking around for someone new to be with.

No wonder lesbians get married on the first date. Just making it that far is an act of courage. In order to date, lesbians must confront and override fear, homophobia and hormones. So, while dating seems like such a sensible, grown-up, civilized alternative to getting married on the first date, it turns out be quite the challenge, indeed.

I'm sure that there are many lesbians out there with successful dating experiences. Write in to Love Matters and tell us how you do it.

In the meantime, don't ever forget, your LOVE MATTERS.

***Linda Sutton, M.A.,** is a psychotherapist in private practice specializing in issues of concern to all women. Along with her partner Maureen, Linda facilitates day-long retreats for lesbian couples to renew and strengthen their relationships. Their next retreat is scheduled for Saturday, February 17, 1996. Call Linda for further information at 632-0465.*

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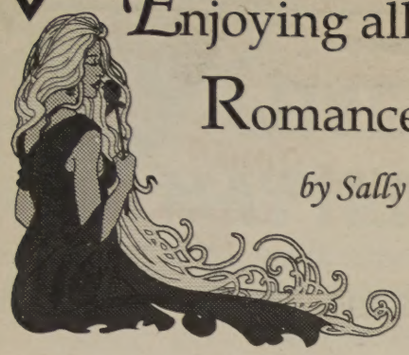
Enjoying all the Romance

by Sally Hall



Holiday season is here already. How time flies when your having fun!! I have opted to submit a vegetable dish to add to your holiday feasts. This recipe will serve 8-12 people and I always recommend for people to alter the recipe to fit their preferences.

2-4 boxes of fresh or frozen broccoli
Paprika
3 tbs. of finely minced onion
1-2 cans French fried onion rings
3 tbs. oleo melted
3/4 cup parmesan cheese grated
Salt and pepper to taste
Can of cream of chicken soup
1/4 of tsp. of dry mustard
1 1/2 cups sweet milk
1/8 of tsp. of marjoram
3 Tbs. of Flour

Method:

Cook broccoli 5-minutes or until bright green. Do not overcook. Drain and arrange in 12 x 71/2" baking dish. Sauté onion in oleo until tender. Blend in seasoning and flour. Add milk and soup gradually. Cook until thickened. Add 1/2 cup of parmesan cheese. Stir until cheese is melted. Pour sauce over broccoli and sprinkle with paprika and remaining cheese. Scatter onion rings over top. Cover and refrigerate until ready to cook. Bake 25 minutes at 375 degrees. Enjoy!! I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and Happy New Year!!

Sally M. Hall

ONE TO WATCH

by Connie Sherkey

Dead Man Walking

In this moving portrait of the unlikely alliance between a nun (Susan Sarandon) and a death-row inmate (Sean Penn), writer-director Tim Robbins is slyly Socratic in making his political points. From the moment Penn's creepy yet boyishly sympathetic convict begs the sister to help him beat his impending hot squat, our loyalties are up for grabs until the film's heart-clobbering denouement. Robbins doesn't engage our emotions by serving up snazzy courtroom scenes or by sending Sarandon's nun on a Norma Rae-ish quest to do the right thing. Instead, we're exposed to brief flashes of the agonies endured by everyone involved: a victim's father at a bereavement meeting; the convict's younger brother slumped over a visiting-room chair; Sarandon's nun shuddering in a prison toilet; or the briefest peek at the strap holding up the inmate's diaper. Shot in the astringent, unembellished manner of a reality-TV segment (kudos to Sarandon for extinguishing her considerable sex appeal) with abrupt, adrenalized flashbacks to the crime itself, the film delivers a refreshingly de-exoticized treatment of the taking of a human life, sanctioned or not.

[Please note: The Palm Springs International Film Festival is scheduled Jan. 5-21, 1996. One of Sonny Bono's shining achievements as mayor of this "desert playground" was to found this event. Call (619) 778-8979 for ticket information.]

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Dykes To Watch Out For

an entrance and an exit
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...SO I SAID TO HER, "I WON'T BE TOYED WITH, DEIRDRE. FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO BE YOUR SEXUAL PLAYTHING!
SPEAKING OF WHICH... DID I MENTION THE SUCCULENT DETAILS OF MY NIGHT WITH BABETTE THE WAITRESS? TALK ABOUT A FEAST.
OFFICE
EXCUSE ME. I HATE TO INTERRUPT, BUT...
WOULD ONE OF YOU GO WORK THE REGISTER? THIS IS A PLACE OF BUSINESS! KEEP YOUR LOVE LIVES OUT OF IT!
PRESENTLY...
HI! IS JEZANNA IN?
YEAH. I'LL BUZZ HER. WHO SHOULD I SAY IS HERE?
MMMMWAM
BOOM!
AUDREY?
HI, BABY! I GOT THE WEEKEND OFF! I THOUGHT I'D COME UP AND GIVE YOU A THRILL!
MEANWHILE...
THANK YOU, CLARENCE THOMAS AND SANDRA DAY O' CONNOR.
LEMME SEE... I THINK MY FAVORITE ARGUMENT AGAINST AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IS THAT "SPECIAL TREATMENT" IS INSULTING TO AFRICAN AMERICANS. I MEAN, HOW MANY WHITE GUYS DO YOU KNOW WHO FEEL "INSULTED" BY THE SPECIAL TREATMENT THEY'VE GOTTEN FOR CENTURIES?
CLARICE, WILL YOU PUT DOWN THE PAPER? WE ONLY SEE EACH OTHER FOR AN HOUR A DAY. COULD WE AT LEAST TRY TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
I'M HAVING A CONVERSATION!
WITH WHO? I WAS TALKING TO YOU ABOUT HOW TO COME OUT TO MY PARENTS, WHEN YOU PICKED UP THE NEWSPAPER AND STARTED RANTING!
TONI, I'VE HEARD YOUR PLANS TO COME OUT TO YOUR FOLKS NINE MILLION TIMES SINCE WE FIRST MET. EXCUSE ME IF EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE MY MIND WANDERS.
OKAY, CLARICE! I HAVE HAD IT WITH YOU! I DESERVE BETTER THAN THIS! I'M GOING OVER TO GLORIA'S, WHERE SOMEONE WILL LISTEN TO ME!
OH YEAH? AND WHAT ELSE WILL SHE DO TO YOU?
WAHAA!
SHUT UP! DON'T YOU EVER TALK ABOUT HER LIKE THAT! YOU ARE SO FULL OF... OF POOP!
SLAM!
POOP.

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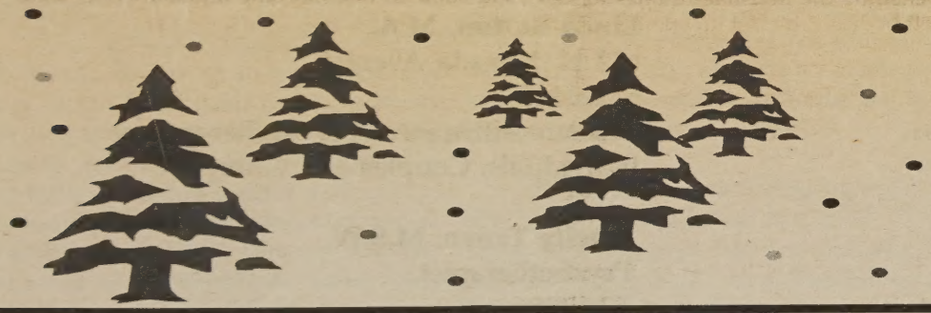

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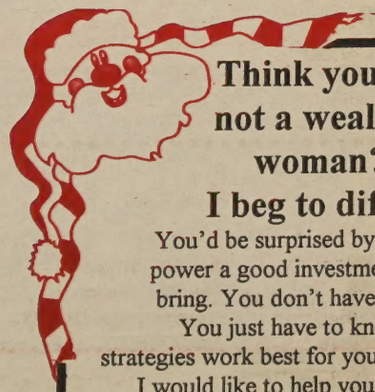

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YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

by Ramona Lidmila

AUGGIE WREN'S CHRISTMAS STORY

(adapted from Paul Auster's column in The New York Times, December of 1990)

I heard this story from Auggie Wren. Since Auggie doesn't come off too well in it, at least not as well as he'd like to, he's asked me not to use his real name. Other than that, the whole business about the lost wallet and the blind woman and the Christmas dinner is just as he told it to me.

Auggie and I have known each other for close to 11 years now. He works behind the counter of a cigar store on Court Street in downtown Brooklyn, New York, and since it's the only store that carries the little Dutch cigars I like to smoke (Schimmelpennincks), I go in there fairly often. For a long time, I didn't give much thought to Auggie Wren. He was the strange little man who wore a hooded blue sweatshirt and sold me cigars and magazines, the impish, wisecracking character who always had something funny to say about the weather or the Mets or the politicians in Washington, and that was the extent of it.

But then one day several years ago he happened to be looking through a magazine in the store, and he stumbled across a review of one of my books. He knew it was me because a photograph accompanied the review, and after that things changed between us. I was no longer just another customer to Auggie; I had become a distinguished person. Most people couldn't care less about books and writers, but it turned out that Auggie considered himself an artist. Now that he had cracked the secret of who I was, he embraced me as an ally, a confidant, a brother-in-arms. To tell the truth, I found it rather embarrassing. Then, almost inevitably, a moment came when he asked if I would be willing to look at his photographs. Given his enthusiasm and goodwill, there didn't seem to be any way I could turn him down.

God knows what I was expecting. At the very least, it wasn't what Auggie showed me the next day. In a small, windowless room at the back of the store, he opened a cardboard box and pulled out 12 identical black photo albums. This was his life's work, he said, and it didn't take him more than five minutes a day to do it. Every morning for the past 12 years, he had stood at the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Clinton Street at precisely 7 o'clock and had taken a single color photograph of precisely the same view. The project now ran to more than 4000 photographs. Each album represented a different year, and all the pictures were laid out in sequence, from January 1 to December 31, with the dates carefully recorded under each one.

As I flipped through the albums and began to study Auggie's work, I didn't know what to think. My first impression was that it was the oddest, most bewildering thing I had ever seen. All the pictures were the same. The whole project was a numbing onslaught of repetition, the same street and the same buildings over and over again, an unrelenting delirium of redundant images. I couldn't think of anything to say to Auggie, so I continued turning pages, nodding my head in feigned appreciation. Auggie himself seemed unperturbed, watching me with a broad smile on his face, but after I'd been at it for several minutes, he suddenly interrupted me and said, "You're going too fast. You'll never get it if you don't slow down."

He was right, of course. If you don't take the time to look, you'll never manage to see anything. I picked up another album and forced myself to go more deliberately. I paid closer attention to details, took note of shifts in the weather, watched for the changing angles of light as the seasons advanced. Eventually, I was able to detect subtle differences in the traffic flow, to anticipate the rhythm of the different days (the commotion of workday mornings, the relative stillness of weekends, the contrast between Saturdays and Sundays). And then, little by little, I began to recognize the faces of the people in the background, the passers-by on their way to work, the same people in the same spot every morning, living an instant of their lives in the field of Auggie's camera.

Once I got to know them, I began to study their postures, the way they carried themselves from one morning to the next, trying to discover their moods from these surface indications, as if I could imagine stories for them, as if I could penetrate the invisible dramas locked inside their bodies. I picked up another album. I was no longer bored, no longer puzzled as I had been at first. Auggie was photographing time, I realized, both natural time and human time, and he was doing it by planting himself in one tiny corner of the world and willing it to be his own, by standing guard in the space he had chosen for himself. As he watched me pore over his work, Auggie continued to smile with pleasure. Then, almost as if he had been reading my thoughts, he began to recite a line from Shakespeare. "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow," he muttered under his breath, "time creeps at its pretty pace." I understood then that he knew exactly what he was doing.

That was more than 2000 pictures ago. Since that day, Auggie and I have discussed his work many times, but it was only last week that I learned how he acquired his camera and started taking pictures in the first place. That was the subject of the story he told me, and I'm still struggling to make sense of it.

Earlier that same week, a man from the New York Times called me and asked if I would be willing to write a short story that would appear in the paper on Christmas morning. My first impulse was to say no, but the man was very charming and persistent, and by the end of the conversation I told him I would give it a try. The moment I hung up the phone, however, I fell into a deep panic. What did I know about Christmas? I asked myself. What did I know about writing short stories on commission?

I spent the next several days in despair, warring with the ghosts of Dickens, O. Henry and other masters of the Yuletide spirit. The very phrase "Christmas story" had unpleasant associations for me, evoking dreadful outpourings of hypocritical mush and treacle. Even at their best, Christmas stories were no more than wish- fulfillment dreams, fairy tales for adults, and I'd be damned if I'd ever allowed myself to write something like that. And yet, how could anyone propose to write an unsentimental Christmas story? It was a contradiction in terms, an impossibility, an out-and-out conundrum. One might just as well try to imagine a racehorse without legs, or a sparrow without wings.

I got nowhere. On Thursday I went out for a long walk, hoping the air would clear my head. Just past noon, I stopped in at the cigar store to replenish my supply, and there was Auggie, standing behind the counter as always. He asked me how I was. Without really meaning to, I found myself unburdening my troubles to him. "A Christmas story?" he said after I had finished. "Is that all? If you buy me lunch, my friend, I'll tell you the best Christmas story you ever heard. And I guarantee that every word of it is true."

We walked down the block to Jack's, a cramped and boisterous delicatessen with good pastrami sandwiches and photographs of old Dodgers teams hanging on the walls. We found a table at the back, ordered our food, and then Auggie launched into his story.

"It was the summer of '72," he said. "A kid came in one morning and started stealing things from the store. He must have been about 19 or 20, and I don't think I've ever seen a more pathetic shoplifter in my life. He's standing by the rack of paperbacks along the far wall and stuffing books into the pockets of his raincoat. It was crowded around the counter just then, so I didn't see him at first. But once I noticed what he was up to, I started to shout. He took off like a jackrabbit, and by the time I managed to get out from behind the counter, he was already tearing down Atlantic Avenue. I chased after him for about half a block, and then I gave up. He'd dropped something along the way, and since I didn't feel like running anymore, I bent down to see what it was.

"It turned out to be his wallet. There wasn't any money inside, but his driver's license was there along with three or four snapshots. I suppose I could have called the cops and had him arrested. I had his name and address from the license, but I felt kind of sorry for him. He was just a measly little punk, and once I looked at those pictures in his wallet, I couldn't bring myself to feel very angry at him. Robert Goodwin. That was his name. In one of the pictures, I remember, he was standing with his arm around his mother or grandmother. In another one, he was just sitting there at age nine or ten dressed in a baseball uniform with a big smile on his face. I just didn't have the heart. He was probably on dope now, I figured. A poor kid from Brooklyn without much going for him, and who cared about a couple of trashy paperbacks anyway?

TO BE CONTINUED IN FEBRUARY OF 1996.

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